

A newly discovered colony of Barberry Carpet *Pareulype berberata* (D. & S.) (Lep.: Geometridae) in Oxfordshire

On 7 August 2004, two good condition examples of the Barberry Carpet were attracted to a single MV light at a site in west Oxfordshire (in VC 23) by Christopher and Stephanie Carter, who kindly sent MCT a good photograph of one of them as confirmation, in February 2005. They had never run a light trap before 2005, and are to be congratulated on correctly identifying the moths. This is the first record in modern Oxfordshire since 1981, and the first record from VC 23 since 1979. Previously, two were caught in a light trap at Littleworth near Faringdon (VC 22) in 1979, one in June and one in August, and one in May 1981 (Corley, M.F.V. 1981. *Pareulype berberata* (D. & S.) (Lep.: Geometridae) in Oxfordshire. *Ent. Gaz.* **36**:152), but subsequent searches for the foodplant in the area were unsuccessful. A worn example was caught in a MV light trap in Kidlington, north of Oxford (VC 23) on 23 June 1979 (Waring, 2000. *British Wildlife* **11**:175-182).

The trapping site is in open country with numerous hedgerows, many of which are tall (>5m). A search for the main foodplant Wild Barberry *Berberis vulgaris* was made by MCT, BE and the Carters, in May 2005. John Campbell (formerly of Oxfordshire Biological Records Centre) had casually noted a small Barberry bush in a roadside hedge less than a kilometre from the trap site several years previously, and several bushes were found along this road, with many more in field boundary hedges nearby along and near a footpath. We returned on 24 June with PW, and in spite of wet conditions found 12 *berberata* larvae, mainly fairly small (c.5-6mm long) by beating. Most were beaten from vigorous re-growth along the side of tall hedges at about 1-1.5m from the ground, with seven larvae along one 5m stretch. This species is included in Red Data Book category 1 (Endangered) and is protected against deliberate killing, injury or sale by Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act* (1981). The work was carried out under licence from English Nature and all larvae were returned to the foodplant. Roughly thirty Scarce Tissue *Rheumaptera cervinalis* (Scop.) larvae were also found.

Further light trapping was carried out at the original site in 2005, but no more moths were seen. Further monitoring and searching to ascertain the extent and strength of the colony is planned for 2006. At present it appears to be quite isolated, since the nearest known colonies are a considerable distance away in Wiltshire (Waring, P., Townsend M.C., and Lewington, R., 2003. *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*, British Wildlife). However, the extent of the foodplant was not known at this site and other populations may await discovery in the wider area.— MARTIN C. TOWNSEND, 69 Alice Smith Square, Littlemore, Oxford OX4 4NQ (E-mail: martin.townsend4@ntlworld.com), PAUL WARING, 1366 Lincoln Road, Werrington, Peterborough PE4 6LS (E-mail: paul_waring@btinternet.com) and BOB EELES, 69 Alexander Close, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 1XB (E-mail: eeleseveretts@diggingandmoths.fsnet.co.uk).